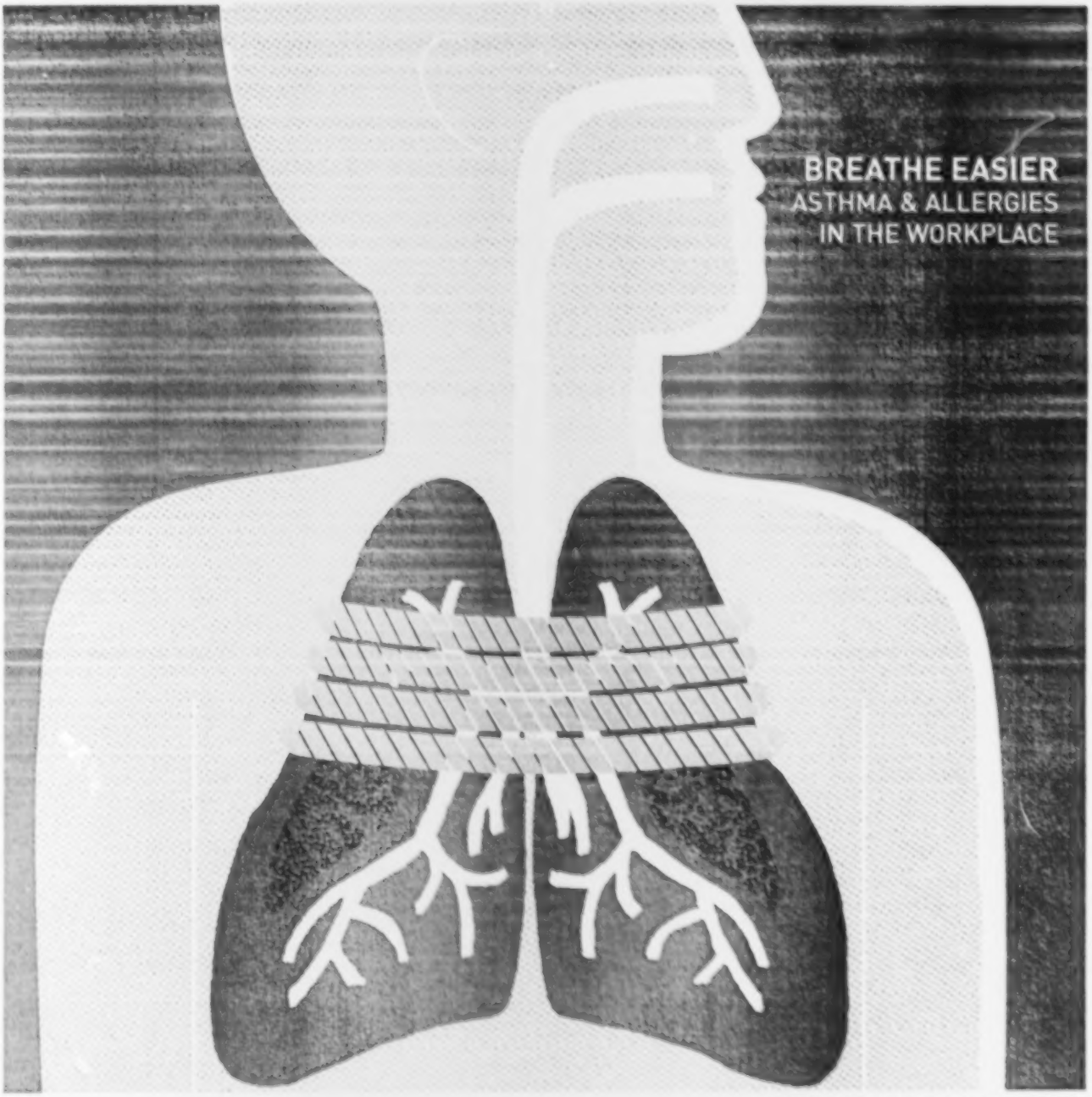
OCCUPATIONAL

HEALTH & SAFETY

MAY 2016



EMPLOYMENT.ALBERTA.CA/WHS-OHSMAG

IT'S JOB TIME: TALK TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT WORKPLACE SAFETY NOW

by Julie Hamilton

The all-important first job

Hallelujah! Your kids got summer jobs. You are so proud.

Hold on. A person's first job is a huge step and sometimes a dangerous step into the world of being an adult. Teaching your children how to get the job was just the first lesson. Teaching them about workplace safety is the next important step.

Young, new employees want to impress the boss. When you explain to your young workers that a strong work ethic is an important life skill, don't forget to explain that safety is a part of that work ethic. It is up to each worker to stay vigilant—it's one way workers show respect for themselves, their co-workers and the employer.

Don't skip this lesson

How I wish someone had told me to talk to my son, Tim, about job safety. In July 1999, Tim was killed while working on a summer job. I hadn't thought a grown man would, with forethought, place anybody's son in a dangerous position. But Tim's boss did.

There isn't a day that I don't miss that boy. I still dread silent moments where my thoughts turn to him—his hugs, his voice, his appetite, his touch, his smile, even the hockey player smell of him. It's been more than 10 years and it still hurts.

Do all you can to avoid this happening to your family.

Reading a work site

Workplace safety doesn't just happen. It must be taught. Don't just jam rules down your kids' throats. Instead, teach them how to watch for danger—how to "read" a work site.

A job site is a place with lots of people and lots of activity. Explain that most people do the job *right*—the safe way—but some people don't care about what's right and want to just get it done and done fast. Explain that those are the people to look out for because those are the ones who get people hurt and killed. Help your children understand that nobody goes to work to hurt anybody, but some people can't be trusted: *You must always watch out for yourself.*

Main lessons for safety

Give your children ways to cope with unsafe work pressures:

1. Emphasize they have the right to refuse unsafe work.
2. Emphasize that the boss is responsible for training them.
3. Teach them how to ask a question. If a question feels stupid, they can ask it without using the words "me" or "I." Instead of saying, "I don't feel safe doing this," they can ask, "Are there safety issues we should talk about before we do this?" or "Isn't there supposed to be some training before I do this?" If that doesn't get the boss to re-assess the situation, then your child can directly say, "I don't feel safe doing this." And if necessary, refuse to do the task.

Tim Hamilton

4. The toll-free number for the OH&S Contact Centre is 1-866-415-8690. Parents should write it, in Magic Marker, on the wall inside their kid's closet and on a piece of paper that they hand to their child and watch him or her put in their wallet or program into their cellphone.

Julie Hamilton is a speaker on workplace health and safety. You can read more about her at www.missingtim.com.

WHAT TO SAY IN THE TALK:

- A work ethic is a life skill.
- I am extremely proud of you.
- You can't trust others to look out for your safety. You have to watch out for yourself.
- What will you be doing on this job?
- Will you be using tools, ladders or vehicles?
- Will you be working alone or with a partner?
- Whom do you go to when you have a question on the job site?
- Whom do you go to if that person's away?
- If you saw a hazard, whom would you speak to?
- If the hazard isn't dealt with, what would you do?

OCCUPATIONAL
HEALTH & SAFETY

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Dan Clarke Managing Editor
Lee Craig Editor

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Membership on the *Occupational Health & Safety* magazine advisory board is open to any resident of Alberta with knowledge and experience in health and safety, and an interest in communicating health and safety information to the public. Anyone who is interested in joining the board should submit a letter of application to the managing editor of the magazine. The board meets three times a year in Edmonton. Board members do not receive remuneration or reimbursement for expenses related to meetings. See "Contacting the editor," below.

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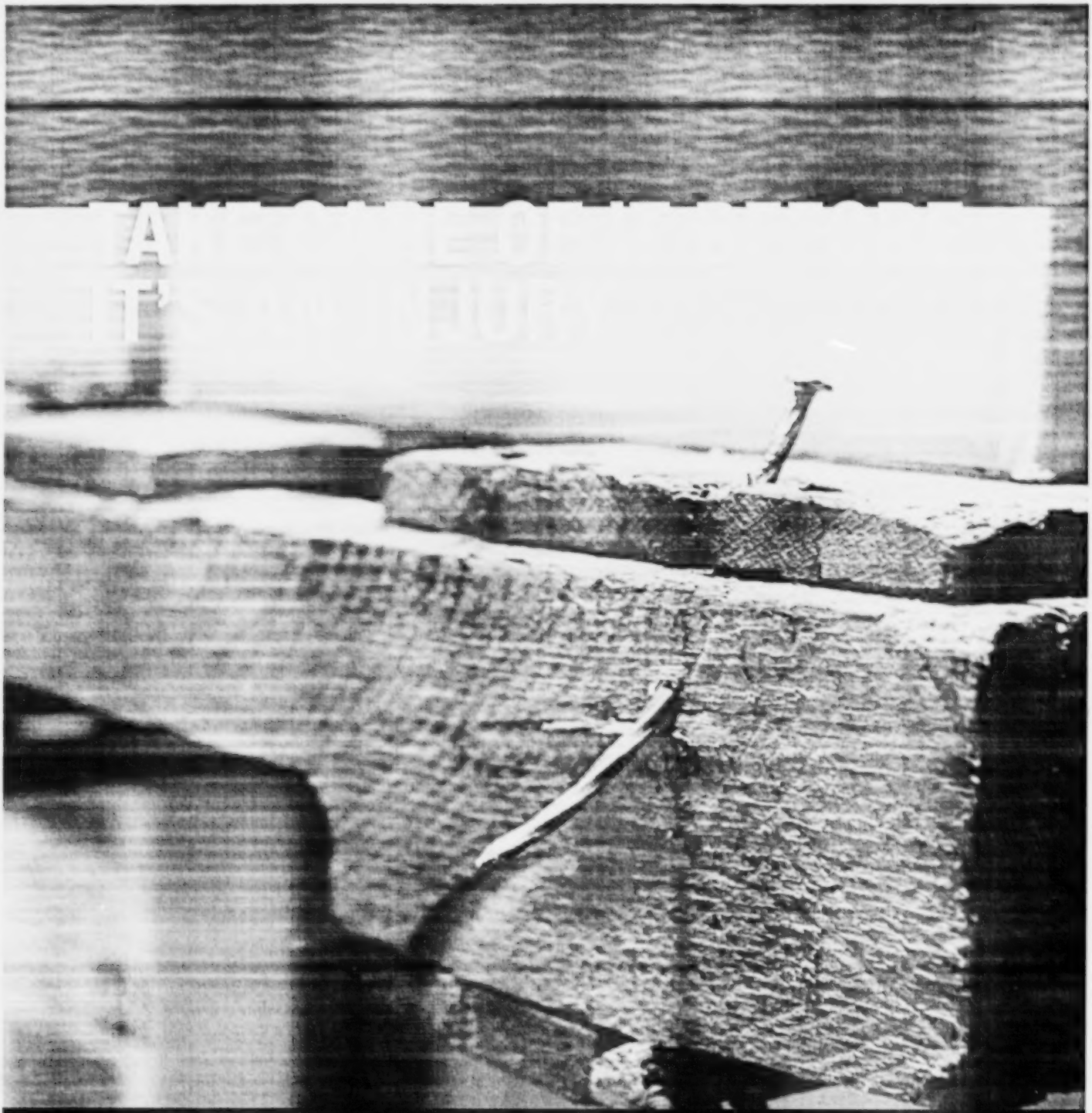


If you see something unsafe, do something about it.

That's how you prevent a workplace injury. That's how you stay safe.
Learn more at worksafe.alberta.ca or call toll-free 1-866-415-8690
(Edmonton and area (780) 415-8690).

Government of Alberta

WORK SAFE ALBERTA

WATCH OUT FOR THAT BUCKET!

AD CAMPAIGN'S GOAL IS TO REDUCE WORKPLACE INJURIES BY 25 PER CENT BY 2012

The Alberta government has launched a new public awareness campaign to educate Albertans about workplace health and safety. The television and radio advertisements focus on how to avoid injuries that can be caused by everyday objects such as a bucket, a ladder or a nail.

The advertisements and posters are available at employment.alberta.ca/sfw/12326.html.

Health & Safety Conference Society of Alberta

PROVIDING SOLUTIONS FOR A HEALTHY AND SAFE WORKPLACE

Mark your calendars: the **ninth annual Alberta Health and Safety Conference and Trade Fair** is being held in Edmonton on November 8, 9 and 10, 2010, at the Shaw Conference Centre. This year's theme is Workplaces on the Move, and the technical stream is on Transportation. The opening speaker is Michael 'Pinball' Clemons. For more information on the conference and trade fair, check the website at www.hsconference.com.

BE CAREFUL ON THE ROAD

FLAG PEOPLE NEED YOU TO WATCH OUT FOR THEM

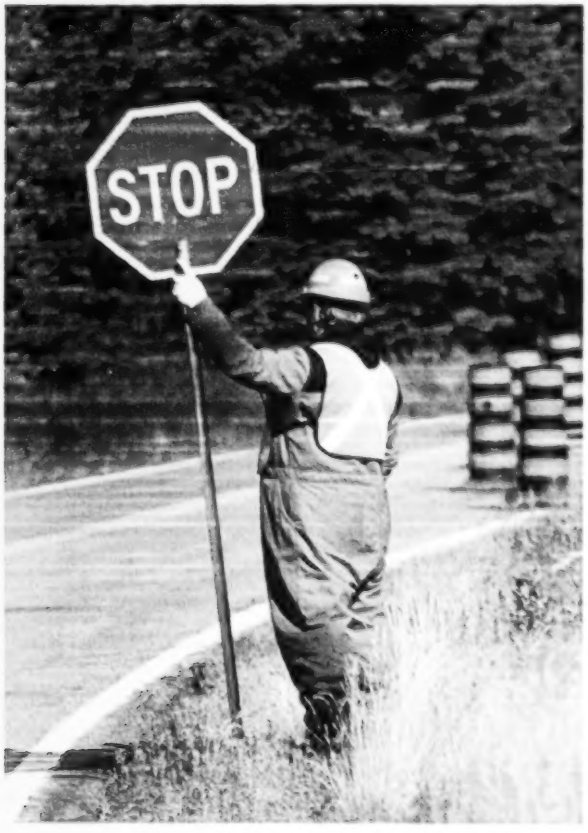
They are wearing reflective jumpsuits and holding big bright signs. They are doing a job and trying to be safe. They are flag people.

It's road construction season in Alberta, and health and safety officers ask drivers to slow down and pay attention to all workers on the roads.

"One of the biggest problems is that flag people are unable to completely control their hazard 100 per cent," says Casey Leahey, an occupational health and safety officer and lead investigator for Employment and Immigration.

They put up signage and pylons, have all the flashing arrowboards and wear personal protective equipment, says Leahey, "but they have to rely on traffic coming at them to some extent. They are literally out there on the roads."

In Alberta, two flag people have died on the job in the last year. In March 2010, a flag man died after being struck by a vehicle. He was directing traffic around emergency services working at an earlier fatal collision. Last summer, a landscape labourer was picking up traffic cones when he was struck by a passenger vehicle and crushed against a landscaping truck.



Gil Riggan, a health and safety officer for Alberta Highway Services, agrees that not being seen by the public is a big hazard for road workers. "There's lots of inattention by drivers and lots of traffic. It's a hazardous environment."

Of course, Leahey and Riggan say flag people are responsible as well.

"Flag people are trained, but a person on the job can still be distracted by stopped vehicles or other work activities. They can daydream, and there are sometimes weather conditions to contend with," says Leahey.

Riggan points out that workers look out for each other, too. There are different forms of communication between work crews and a flag person, he says.

"It's a critical situation out there. Workers go to work every day on our roads and highways, and if they make one mistake and step over a line, they'll get hit."

Incidents are preventable though, Leahey and Riggan say, most of the time.

Maintaining a route of escape from oncoming traffic is essential to a flag person's safety. The simple act of talking to a driver or passenger in a stopped vehicle immediately reduces a flag person's route of escape. The importance of escape routes is taught in flag person training.

Main responsibilities of a flag person:

- signing work zones (set-up)
- ensuring signs are up to provincial standards
- if there is a specific need at a work zone, maintaining control of traffic to provide safety for the public and for workers in the work zone.

Congratulations to everyone who participated in NAOSH Week (which was May 2 to 8, 2010). For details on what happened, see www.naosh.ca.

NAOSH stands for North American Occupational Safety and Health Week. Its goal is to focus employees, employers, partners and the public on the importance of preventing injury and illness in the workplace, at home and in the community.

North American Occupational Safety and Health Week

IS THERE STILL ENOUGH TIME TO PROTECT YOUR HEARING?

Have you gone for your hearing test at work and been told that you have a change in your hearing? The Occupational Health and Safety Code requires workers to undergo audiometric testing if they are or may be exposed to noise in excess of 85 dBA Lex (an exposure equivalent of 85 decibels for eight hours) and the noise exposure limits specified in Schedule 3 of the code. When a worker is or may be exposed to noise in excess of the exposure limits, the worker must receive a baseline audiogram as soon as practical, but no later than six months after the start of employment or when work activities change and the worker becomes noise exposed.

Audiometric testing is a hearing test conducted by a qualified audiometric technician who works in consultation with a physician, audiologist or occupational health nurse. Audiometric testing is required 12 months after the baseline test and then every two years while the work conditions meet the noise exposure criteria.

Audiometric testing of workers' hearing is important to the success of the noise management program—it is the only way to determine if occupational hearing loss is being prevented. Because hearing loss happens gradually over time, workers often fail to notice changes in their hearing until a fairly large change occurs. Audiometric testing measures the effects of noise exposure from all sources, not just work-related noise exposure. Not wearing or removing hearing protection for short periods of time in a noisy environment may affect your hearing.

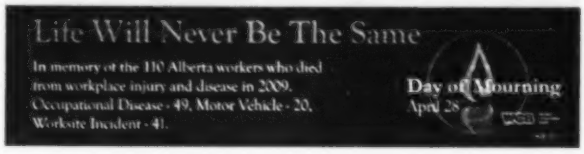
Audiometric technicians who identify an audiogram as being abnormal or having an abnormal shift must send the results of the audiogram to a physician or audiologist designated by the employer to review audiograms.

In a report on the evaluation of audiometric criteria for occupational hearing loss, Dr. Peter Rabinowitz, Yale University, found that there is a short time (average three to four years) from identifying an abnormal shift to developing noise-induced hearing loss.

Because there is a short window of opportunity, preventive measures are critical. They should be implemented as soon as possible after an abnormal shift has been identified. Once it has been confirmed that there is an abnormal shift audiogram, the following should be reviewed:

- noise levels the worker is exposed to at the work site
- type of hearing protection worn
- appropriateness of hearing protection for the noise levels
- hearing protection worn correctly
- hearing protection worn at all times when noise exposed
- hearing protection in good condition, with nothing interfering with the seal
- hours of work in noisy environment
- number of workers with abnormal shift
- worker education and training, including preventive measures at work and away from work

Werner, 86, silicosis - **Gerald**, 62, trauma - **Robert**, 50, trauma - **Douglas**, 47, motor vehicle accident - **Dale**, 61, motor vehicle accident - **Harrel**, 80, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease - **Jacob**, 77, asbestosis - **Clifford**, 69, asbestosis - **Alexander**, 68, toxic fumes - **Jim**, 52, trauma - **Henry**, 70, asbestosis - **Alvin**, 75, trauma - **Gary**, 55, trauma - **Svend**, 70, asbestosis - **Vernon**, 48, trauma - **Lawrence**, 70, asbestosis - **Ronald**, 62, pulmonary disease - **Mathew**, 88, asbestosis - **Raymond**, 74, asbestosis - **Roy**, 70, asbestosis - **Robert**, 60, cancer - **Glen**, 68, asbestosis - **Garth**, 72, trauma - **Patrick**, 69, cancer - **Roland**, 60, motor vehicle accident - **Thomas**, 71, mesothelioma - **Lorreen**, 53, trauma - **Bruce**, 68, asbestosis - **Paul**, 51, trauma - **William**, 75, asbestosis - **Joseph**, 49, cancer - **Etsel**, 50, trauma - **Joyce**, 68, mesothelioma - **Raymond**, 66, mesothelioma - **Antoine**, 53, mesothelioma - **Wesley**, 65, mesothelioma - **Kenneth**, 78, asbestosis - **Julius**, 60, silicosis - **Lloyd**, 64, mesothelioma - **Emile**, 72, mesothelioma - **Randy**, 36, motor vehicle accident - **Alice**, 78, mesothelioma - **George**, 77, mesothelioma - **Eric**, 57, mesothelioma - **Phillip**, 25, motor vehicle accident - **Gerald**, 85, asbestosis - **Delman**, 67, mesothelioma - **Jacob**, 59, mesothelioma - **George**, 75, mesothelioma - **Jennifer**, 25, trauma - **Julian**, 59, mesothelioma - **Robert**, 50, motor vehicle accident - **Louie**, 87, mesothelioma - **John**, 62, cancer - **Roger**, 62, mesothelioma - **Stanley**, 84, mesothelioma - **David**, 65, heart attack - **Thomas**, 48, trauma - **Chilton**, 75, mesothelioma - **Roger**, 69, asbestosis - **Bradley**, 45, trauma - **Lee**, 30, trauma - **Joey**, 40, motor vehicle accident - **Kenneth**, 65, motor vehicle accident - **Veronica**, 40, motor vehicle accident - **Jason**, 32, electrocution - **Damien**, 27, electrocution - **Bruce**, 51, trauma - **James**, 84, cancer - **James**, 35, motor vehicle accident - **Mark**, 42, plane crash - **Paul**, 62, motor vehicle accident - **Konstantine**, 76, asbestosis - **Paul**, 47, motor vehicle accident - **Herluf**, 67, plane crash - **John**, 72, asbestosis - **Matthew**, 26, trauma - **William**, 72, asbestos pleural disease - **Karen**, 34, trauma - **Duane**, 44, assault - **Hendrik**, 81, asbestosis - **Paramjit**, 48, motor vehicle accident - **Roman**, 35, trauma - **Louis**, 80, cancer - **Lance**, 27, trauma - **Corey**, 36, trauma - **Adam**, 26, trauma - **Monaire**, 39, trauma - **Ugo**, 63, cancer - **Rikki**, 23, trauma - **Wayne**, 60, heart attack - **Brian**, 54, motor vehicle accident - **Stephan**, 23, motor vehicle accident - **Sefatullah**, 18, trauma - **Darryl**, 37, trauma - **Donald**, 61, trauma - **Sydney**, 19, motor vehicle accident - **Gurjit**, 40, motor vehicle accident - **Lincoln**, 36, trauma - **Michael**, 49, assault - **Michael**, 45, trauma - **Trov**, 25, trauma - **Alan**, 54, drowning - **Cody**, 22, trauma - **Art**, 76, mesothelioma - **Sheldon**, 29, trauma - **Lyanne**, 40, motor vehicle accident - **Ryan**, 26, trauma - **Ronald**, 61, trauma - **Murgappa**, 52, trauma


Life Will Never Be The Same
In memory of the 110 Alberta workers who died from workplace injury and disease in 2009.
Occupational Disease - 49, Motor Vehicle - 20, Worksite Incident - 41.
Day of Mourning
April 28

On April 28, 2010, people across the country recognized a **Day of Mourning** for all workers who have died from workplace injury or disease. In 2009, according to the Workers' Compensation Board-Alberta, there were 110 workplace fatalities in Alberta.

WHY IS FIRST AID NEVER FIRST?

by Sean McIntyre

As an Occupational Health and Safety officer, I have conducted many work site inspections through most industries. These inspections have resulted in OH&S orders being issued for all types of contraventions of the OH&S Act, Regulation and Code. In my experience, no order involves more explanation, exasperation or exhaustion than first aid infractions.

Section 178 of the OH&S Code identifies that every work site requires a minimum fulfillment of first aid services, supplies and equipment based on workforce size, potential hazards and proximity to emergency medical services. After an OH&S officer issues this order, however, some employers will immediately say that a hospital is only a few blocks or a phone call away, thinking that removes the need for any on-site first aid providers. Some employers have also suggested that neighbouring companies will allow, if requested, a first-aider to be "borrowed" in the event of an emergency. Employers may identify first aid as something that is used at home, for recreation or on vacation, but not imminently necessary at their own places of business.

Why is it so unbelievable that a potentially life-threatening injury or illness could occur at these employers' work sites? Maybe they have never had an injury or accident or have never had to replenish their first aid kits beyond the Band-Aid box. Maybe they think that a transient workforce leads to continuous work site training.

Whatever the thinking, it is time to start adding first aid to the list of control measures in place at your work site. First aid is just as valuable as a machine guard, safe operating procedures or steel-toed boots in protecting workers from further injury. The associated cost and time loss for training can be justified through the fulfillment of the legislated responsibility to provide a safe and healthy work site for all. Besides, if your workers use this first aid training in their personal lives away from work, that is an added value that may just give you happier and healthier workers at your site.

The View from the Field will be written by a different OH&S officer for each issue of OH&S *magazine. Thank you to Sean McIntyre for writing the first column.*

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY

Contact us any time
For occupational health and safety information and assistance, or to order Occupational Health and Safety publications, phone the Contact Centre at
1-866-415-8690
780-415-8690 in Edmonton and area
e-mail whs@gov.ab.ca

WORK SAFE
ALBERTA

Sign up for Occupational Health and Safety news
To be notified by e-mail of all new Occupational Health and Safety website postings, sign up for a FREE subscription service through employment.alberta.ca/SFW/126.html.

Alberta Government Library – Labour Building Site
To review the large selection of occupational health and safety information materials available through the Alberta government, go to employment.alberta.ca/1706.html.

To borrow materials, either contact your local library and make your requests through the inter-library loan system or visit the Alberta Government Library:

3rd floor, 10808 - 99 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 0G5

Library phone
780-427-8533

Audio-Visual Services phone
780-427-4671

To reach either of the above numbers toll-free in Alberta, dial 310-0000 followed by the area code and phone number.

Library fax 780-422-0084

Occupational Health and Safety is an Alberta Employment and Immigration program that falls under the jurisdiction of Minister Thomas Lukaszuk.

PARTNERSHIPS NEWS

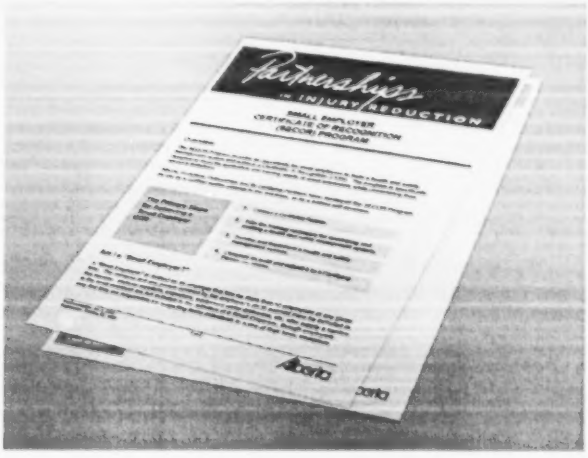
On-Site Audit Review update

The On-Site Audit Review process was launched in March 2010 as a way to verify audit report findings and whether auditors are following correct procedures. Over a 10-month period, on-site audit reviewers will visit 120 Alberta employers asking for feedback on their audit experience. Selected employers will be asked to take part in a short interview and provide a tour of their facilities. Reviewers will also request access to hazard assessment documentation to conduct a limited documentation review.

The review is designed to take a minimal amount of time. Findings will ultimately determine whether employers have access to the information they need to improve their health and safety management systems.

Employers selected to take part in the review will receive a letter from Partnerships or from their Certifying Partner. Scheduling will be done by phone.

Employers who have questions about the process can contact Partnerships or their Certifying Partner.



Extending audit scope to out-of-province temporary work sites

A new policy approved by the Certifying Partners in December 2009 will allow Alberta employers that operate temporary work sites outside of the province to include these sites in the scope of their audits. The work carried out on both out-of-province and Alberta sites must be similar.

Employers interested in proceeding with this type of audit should contact their Certifying Partner for details on all the conditions they must meet.

Small Employer Certificate of Recognition program review

The Small Employer Certificate of Recognition program offers companies with fewer than 10 employees an opportunity to build a health and safety management system and to achieve a Certificate of Recognition. The program is designed to meet the specific needs of small employers that may have limited resources.

A review of SECOR is now underway. A survey was distributed earlier this year. The results will help determine whether or not changes are needed to fully meet the health and safety needs of small employers in Alberta.

Is that COR valid?

Employers that require subcontractors to hold an active COR are advised that incidences of altered or forged certificates have increased. You can quickly and easily verify an employer's COR status online by visiting the Partnerships section of the Employment and Immigration website.

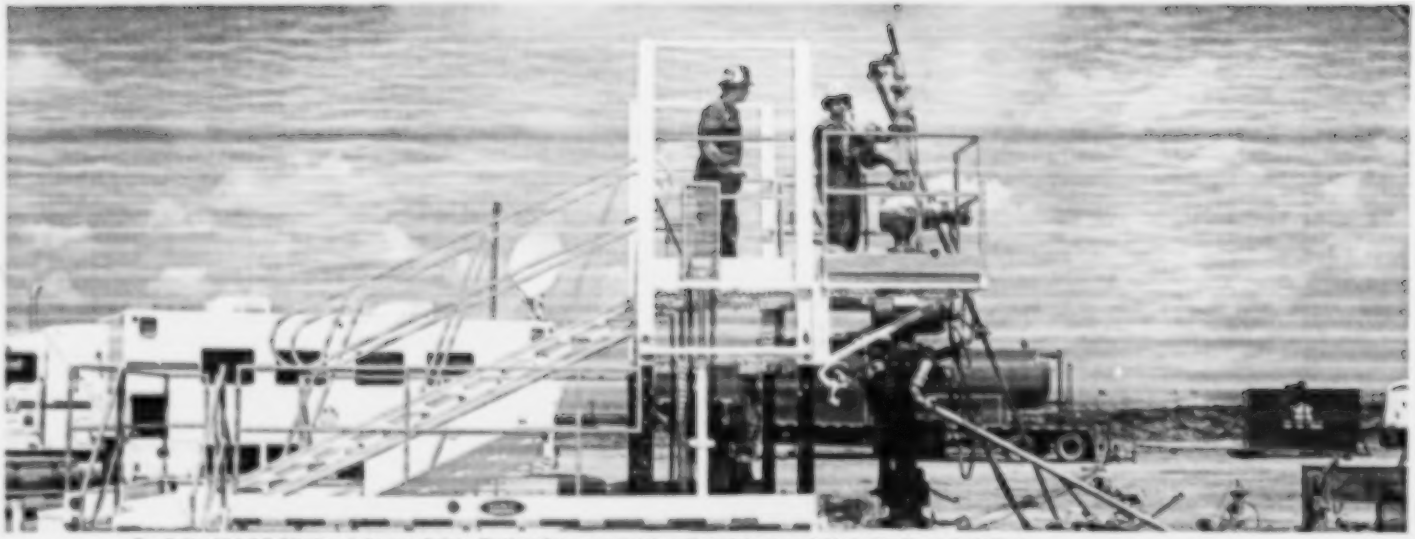
The online COR-holder list is updated weekly at www.employment.alberta.ca/documents/WHS/WHS-PS-COR.pdf. It is the best source for current and reliable verification of an employer's COR status.

Partnerships
in INJURY/REDUCTION

Partnerships in Injury Reduction is a non-regulatory, province-wide injury prevention program sponsored co-operatively by government, labour and industry. The program offers:

- tools to implement a health and safety management system
- guidance in applying for a Certificate of Recognition (COR)
- potential for premium rebates from the Workers' Compensation Board-Alberta

For more information, call the Partnerships Hotline at 1-866-415-8690 or visit employment.alberta.ca/whs-partnerships/.



The Colter W.A.S.P. (Wellhead, Access, Safety, Platform) is a completely self-contained, portable hydraulic work platform.

WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY AWARDS FOR 2010

by Nordahl Flakstad

Effective occupational health and safety programs deliver their own rewards through lives saved and injuries prevented. But public recognition in the form of an Alberta Workplace Health and Safety Award helps too.

"The awards recognize those employers who are doing innovative and proactive things to improve health and safety in their workplaces," says Tim Bennett, chair of the Occupational Health and Safety Council, which gives out the awards together with Work Safe Alberta.

This year, eight employers received awards. They were recognized at an April 12 luncheon in Edmonton.

Innovation Award
(individuals or organizations that have implemented a new, unique, forward-thinking and original idea to create a safer, healthier work environment)

Northern Platforms Ltd. of Beaumont won in the Construction and Construction Trade Services sector. It developed the NP Sampler, which enhances safety by allowing workers to gather samples from dry-bulk truck trailers without climbing to the top of the trailer.

"Far too many folks fall from the tops of trailers, railcars and other vehicles every year when they are put at risk collecting a sample of the product they will be unloading," says Greg Secord of Northern Platforms Ltd.

Colter Energy Services Inc. of Okotoks won in the Mining and Petroleum Development sector. It developed the Wellhead Access Safety Platform (WASP), a portable, self-contained hydraulic platform to protect workers from falls during wellhead completion work.

Leader Award
(organizations that lead their industry with exemplary health and safety management practices, and proven injury and illness prevention track records)

Edmonton Exchanger of Edmonton won in the Construction and Construction Trade Services sector. The firm supplies products and services for applications in various industries, including oil and gas, petrochemical and power generation.

Champion Technologies of Calgary won in the Manufacturing and Processing sector. It is a specialty chemical company.

Performance Improvement Award
(organizations that have dramatically improved their health and safety programs and significantly reduced workplace injuries and illnesses)

This year, four employers were judged to have earned Performance Improvement Awards. It is the first year to have winners in this category.

Pollard Banknote, with Alberta operations in Barrhead, won in the Manufacturing and Processing sector. It provides products and related services to lotteries.

Swamp Mats Inc., a subsidiary of Horizon North of Calgary, won in the Construction and Construction Trade Services sector.

St. Michael's Health Group of Edmonton won in the Public Administration, Education and Health sector.

Van Houtte Coffee Services Inc., a mobile food-services

The NP Sampler, developed by Northern Platforms Ltd., allows workers to gather product samples without climbing to the top of a trailer.

firm, won in the Retail and Wholesale Trade Services sector.

Rose Ann McGinty, an OH&S effective practices specialist, explains that companies receiving the performance improvement award don't necessarily have to do better than others in their industry. "In this award category we are looking at what they have done to improve their health and safety program and how they've improved upon their own past performance," she says.

"It's exciting to me to see employers from non-traditional industries winning these awards," says McGinty. She says having representation from the Retail and Wholesale sector and from the Health Care sector among this year's recipients demonstrates that the Workplace Health and Safety Awards are widening their participation and reach.

There is no single formula for winning but if there is a common denominator, according to McGinty, "it's a shared passion to do better."

Nordahl Flakstad is a freelance writer in Edmonton.

Note: *The application form for the 2011 awards will be posted on the OH&S website by September 2010.*

RESOURCES

WEB LINKS

employment.alberta.ca/SFW/5360.html
Workplace Health and Safety Awards

WHAT IMPROVEMENTS HAVE YOU MADE AT YOUR WORKPLACE?

If you've found a solution worth sharing, please send it to the editor through the Contact Centre (whsf@gov.ab.ca).

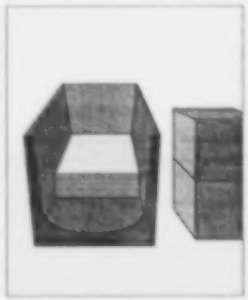
AVOID LIFTING BY LOWERING

The Problem
At least once every 30 seconds, a worker must lift a two- to four-kilogram package onto a weigh scale and weigh it. The constant lifting and lowering is tedious and potentially damaging to the arms, shoulders and lower back.

A Solution
Recess the weigh scale into the table so that packages can be slid on and off the scale, thereby eliminating all lifting.

Benefits
This approach eliminates the lifting component of the job. The employer should still rotate the worker through other work stations to vary his or her work and avoid highly repetitive motions.

EMPTYING A DEEP BOX



The Problem
To access the contents of a deep box, workers have to lean over the high edge. This action gets more and more awkward the deeper into the box that workers must reach.

A Solution
Cut down the side of the box (taking care not to damage the products inside) to give workers easy access to the contents.

Benefits
Workers no longer need to struggle to reach products, which avoids awkward and uncomfortable body positions.

STUDENT FILMMAKERS SPREAD THE SAFETY MESSAGE

by Allan Mott

Over 20 years ago celebrated film director Francis Ford Coppola predicted that a revolution was coming in the world of cinema—one in which the next big blockbuster might be made by a little girl with her parents' camcorder. Coppola seems to have been correct in imagining a future where technology would ease many barriers. Digital cameras have erased the enormous expense of buying and processing film, and home computers can now run video-editing software more sophisticated than anything movie professionals used when Coppola made his bold statement.

In 2009 Cailín Mills was charged with devising and running a new contest to raise awareness of the importance of workplace health and safety among Albertan high school students. Mills, an effective practices specialist with Occupational Health and Safety, didn't think past ideas, such as poster design and essay writing, would arouse much interest in tech-obsessed teenagers, even with the promise of a $1000 grand prize. A video-making contest, on the other hand, seemed like the perfect way to get kids excited.

"High school kids don't do posters. They do multimedia," says Mills.

Afraid that setting specific guidelines might stifle creativity, Mills chose to keep the entry rules as simple as possible: no video could go over the strict five-minute time allotment; the video had to be aimed at (and appropriate for) the filmmaker's peers; and the video had to be directly related to the subject of workplace health and safety. Beyond that, the students were free to be as ambitious and original as they wished.

This year the $1000 first-place prize and bragging rights went to Simeon Taylor from Eagle Butte High School in Dunmore, Alberta. His video, *Shattered*, is an emotionally gripping narrative of how the off screen death of a young woman has a profoundly negative effect on the life of her teenage brother. The judges were impressed not just by how well the film was made, but also by how it addressed the issue of workplace safety in a way most likely to leave a lasting impression on its intended audience. "Teenagers can't imagine themselves dying," says Mills, "but they can certainly understand what it would be like to lose someone they love."

> "Teenagers can't imagine themselves dying, but they can certainly understand what it would be like to lose someone they love."
>
> —Cailín Mills

Second place and $750 went to Brad Fleischer from Bert Church High School in Airdrie, Alberta. In his video, *Think*, he re-teamed with his father in a video re-enactment of an acquaintance's real-life workplace incident. Fleischer was last year's winner with his video *Mistakes and Regrets*, which also starred the young director and his father.

Fleischer, who also entered TV and Video Production at the Skills Canada regional competition this spring, says he makes a lot of videos for school projects. "I'm in the video

arts program with an awesome teacher," he says. "We have very updated equipment since the school was awarded a grant of over $100,000 for video equipment."

The third-place prize of $500 went to the team of Jessica Cameron and Heather Berzins from Warner School in Warner, Alberta. They shot *Tragedy, Consequences, Prevention* in the familiar "talking head" style seen in many documentaries. The duo impressed the judges with their professional presentation, crisp editing and the fact that it was scored by an original song.

This year, with word having spread of the contest's existence, Mills was thrilled to see the number of submissions triple. She says it made for a more diverse field of entries, some of which explored the subject with surprising depth and ambition. "By next year, entries will grow even more," she says.

Mills and the Work Safe Alberta Young Worker Provincial Advisory Committee were helped in the judging process by representatives from the multimedia design firm Christie Communications and from Red the Agency (the advertising firm that worked on the Bloodylucky.ca campaign).

Along with the cash prizes, the winners were honoured at a luncheon and award presentation during the 2010 North American Occupational Safety and Health Conference in Edmonton on April 28. Their winning videos, which were first screened during the conference, are available on the Alberta Employment and Immigration website.

If you happen to know a budding high school Coppola, feel free to let him or her know that the contest is continuing again next year. It could be their turn to take the top prize and a possible future of filmmaking glory. Details can be found on the OH&S website.

Allan Mott is a freelance writer and author. His books include Scary Movies *and* Gothic Ghost Stories.

RESOURCES

WEB LINKS

www.employment.alberta.ca/SFW/3608.html
Links to the winners' videos and information about entering the Work Safe Alberta Student Video Contest

bloodylucky.ca
Bloody Lucky (Work Safe Alberta) video to "vote"

FIGHTING WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

by Richard Cairney

When most people think of workplace hazards, images of industrial equipment, strained muscles or mishaps with a staple gun typically spring to mind. But government agencies and businesses are also paying increased attention to a hazard that is too often overlooked: workplace violence. A 2007 report from Statistics Canada found that nearly 20 per cent of all violent incidents in Canada happened in the victim's workplace.

"The main thing an employer has to do is establish that it does not permit violence on the work site," says Dick Bevan, chief of security operations for the Workers' Compensation Board-Alberta.

Bevan was with the Edmonton Police Service for more than 30 years. As an inspector, he spent much of his career commanding high-risk incidents and investigating major workplace crimes, including homicide.

The fatal shooting at an Edmonton car dealership in March and last fall's hostage-taking at WCB-Alberta can bring attention to the problem of workplace violence. But these dramatic events are not representative of the typical issues.

Bevan says workplace violence takes many forms. It ranges from a phone call or personal encounter with a verbally abusive or threatening customer to physical acts of violence. In a video on workplace violence Bevan produced for WCB-Alberta, he uses real-life situations he has encountered. The video opens with a young woman writing a parking ticket and being accosted by an angry passer-by who punches her in the face.

By Bevan's definition, workplace violence includes bullying or any form of behaviour that makes others uncomfortable or distressed. And, he adds, it's important that everyone in the workplace be aware that domestic violence sometimes follows an employee to work from home.

> The OH&S Code defines workplace violence as "the threatened, attempted or actual conduct of a person that causes or is likely to cause physical injury."

Jan Reimer, project co-ordinator for the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, says that by its very term, domestic violence is rarely considered a workplace issue. Sadly, it is.

"Employers are paying for it one way or another because of the implications through lost productivity, absenteeism, calls to your benefit plan or use of company resources by perpetrators," Reimer says. "All of those things are happening in the workplace."

Presently, Reimer is overseeing a research project for the council investigating ways to help employers provide effective domestic violence prevention in the workplace. The research is being conducted in partnership with the Health Sciences Association of Alberta.

The need for the project is clear. A 2009 report released by the council showed that 95 per cent of respondents to a survey agreed family violence affects the workplace, while 91 per cent said they had never received training at work addressing family violence in the workplace.

The fatal shooting at an Edmonton car dealership in March was a recent dramatic example of workplace violence. Photo by Greg Southam—*Edmonton Journal*

Companies need to make sure they communicate to employees that this is an issue they care about, says Reimer. And they need to provide information to their employees on domestic violence resources in the community, she says, "instead of having them feel guilt or shame or be bullied in the workplace for their experiences."

For the sake of all employees, it is important that employers know if a restraining order has been placed on an employee's partner—in case that person shows up at the workplace—and the company needs to have a plan to handle such events.

A GROWING PROBLEM

According to the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, domestic violence in the workplace has been identified as the fastest-growing type of workplace violence in Canada.

- About 70 per cent of domestic violence victims are victimized at work.
- More than 75 per cent of perpetrators who have been charged used workplace resources.
- Fewer than 50 per cent of Canadian workplaces have policies to manage this risk.

While employees shouldn't be expected to be counsellors, they should be informed about some signs that indicate possible domestic abuse: wearing unseasonal clothing to hide bruising, blaming injuries on "clumsiness," absenteeism, uncharacteristic withdrawal in the workplace and controlling behaviour from a spouse, often in the form of constant phone calls.

And, says Reimer, employers need to know that they could have a perpetrator in their workplace, or the victim, or both.

Violence among health care professionals was uncovered through research by the University of Alberta Faculty of Nursing, when a survey of Alberta nurses found an alarming rate of violent behaviour toward nurses.

The research survey included more than 9000 nurses in B.C. and Alberta. It revealed that one in five nurses experienced more than one type of violence during a five-shift period. While patients represented the largest group of abusers, hospital co-workers were responsible for 56.7 per cent of all emotional abuse and 53.6 per cent of verbal sexual harassment.

Katie Pedley, who was the lead author on the study, published in the journal *Health Policy* in 2005, says the trend is reflective of the "broken window" theory of crime. The theory states that by tolerating less serious crimes such as vandalism, a community becomes more tolerant of aberrant behaviour—there is in effect acceptance and approval of it.

"The most shocking thing to me was the rate of emotional abuse amongst nurses," says Pedley.

Pedley says the survey was conducted at the height of the nursing shortage in Alberta. She speculates that the high stress levels in the workplace may have influenced the behaviour—although it certainly doesn't excuse it.

"At the time this data was collected, this kind of behaviour was pervasive," she says. "And if you tie it to the broken window theory, that type of conduct just becomes part of the culture."

Changing that culture is an ongoing challenge. Another resource that WCB-Alberta provides is a website called Workplace Violence News (workplaceviolencenews.com). According to Ross Arrowsmith, a senior corporate security advisor for WCB-Alberta, the site is a clearinghouse of information that companies can use to help prevent violence in the workplace.

While it includes reports of high-profile cases of workplace violence from time to time, it focuses more on what companies have done to prevent violence or what steps they have made following an act of violence to prevent further incidents.

The site has grown in popularity. Since its launch in 2008, when it was receiving about 150 hits per day, the site now draws between 800 and 900 visitors a day. Arrowsmith says the increase indicates that more and more people are becoming aware of the issue and are looking for information on prevention.

"I think people are saying, 'Hey, that could happen here. We really should take a look at this issue.' So when they come to our site they can see best practices and see what other companies are doing."

Bevan is in charge of workplace violence prevention programs for WCB-Alberta. He also provides assistance to Alberta employers. He and his colleagues offer training and consulting to companies across the province, providing them with ideas for policies and practices aimed at preventing workplace violence.

"If their employees are representing the company off-site, management has to support their employees and make it clear that they don't have to put up with abuse while they are doing their jobs," says Bevan. "That might mean sending two employees out on a call instead of one—it depends on the situation."

Because each company is different and has different needs, there is no one-size-fits-all solution to prevent workplace violence. So the presentations WCB-Alberta provides to employers help get companies thinking about their own specific needs. But whatever the situation, companies need to let their employees know that they take the issue seriously.

"I think anyone doing these sorts of things, whether it's a small or large company, someone from senior administration should be supporting this whether it's the owner of the company or the president of the company," says Bevan.

And, as Bevan says, there is no single measure that works for every company. Arrowsmith agrees. He says it's important that employers do some of their own research.

"I know a lot of people would like it if we could just give them a package of information and send them on their way," says Arrowsmith. "But we really want employers to make their own decisions about what is going to work in their own environment."

Richard Cairney is a communications officer for the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Alberta.

HIGHER-RISK OCCUPATIONS

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety identifies certain occupations as being more at risk from workplace violence:

- health care employees
- correctional officers
- social services employees
- teachers
- public works employees
- retail employees
- municipal housing inspectors

RESOURCES

WEB LINKS

www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/violence.html
Violence in the Workplace, Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety

employment.alberta.ca/documents/WHS/WHS-PUB_vah001.pdf
Preventing Violence and Harassment at the Workplace, Workplace Health and Safety Bulletin (Alberta)

workplaceviolencenews.com
Workplace Violence News, WCB-Alberta

www.emirrorsolutions.ca/workplaceviolence/home.html
Canadian Initiative on Workplace Violence

www.wsib.on.ca/wsib/wsibsite.nsf/public/WorkplaceViolence
Violence in the Workplace, Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (Ontario)

IN THE ALBERTA GOVERNMENT LIBRARY – LABOUR BUILDING

(For contact information, see page 8.)

DVD/VHS

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE: IT'S EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS (DVD 001)
This video describes and demonstrates different types of workplace violence situations and typical components of a workplace violence prevention program.

VIOLENCE: KEEPING IT OUT OF THE WORKPLACE (VC 0339)
This program discusses the prevention of violence in the workplace by recognizing that violence is a real problem, and one that is preventable. Highlighted in this video are early warning signs and how to defuse hostility. It outlines a "crisis plan," identifies contributing organizational factors and offers suggestions to increase awareness.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE (VC 0274)
This program will help identify different types of violence, their causes, how to protect yourself and your co-workers, and why reporting workplace violence is extremely important.

FOCUS ON HUMAN PERFORMANCE: MIND GAMES

by Ray Cislo

Investigators looked at all the potential physical and mechanical causes of the incident. When the investigation was complete, they determined the root cause to be "human error." Investigators claimed that the worker had not been paying attention to what he was doing and should have received more training. Under the circumstances, the conclusion appeared sound, but was it?

Increasingly, investigators are looking at why smart people do seemingly dumb things. And it appears that these incidents have their roots in how humans perceive the world around them and then take actions triggered by those perceptions. It looks like a human error, but there's more to it.

If someone says that they're going to use fall protection equipment, most people automatically conjure up a mental image of a worker wearing a full body harness and using a lanyard and shock absorber connected to an anchor point. This belief is a mental model, held in our brains, that represents an expectation. How closely our expectations match the actual situation is a function of what we know, what we've learned and what we believe. Because of this, mental models include what we *think* is true, not necessarily what *is* true.

That discrepancy is where we can get into trouble. If we've done a particular task 100 times, we may continue to do it the same way the 101st time even if the circumstances and conditions differ somewhat from the previous times. Rather than carefully examining the circumstances of the task this time, our mental model says that it is the same as the previous 100 times, so we switch to autopilot.

Our brains and senses go into vacation mode, and we tend not to notice things that are inconsistent with the model. We may even push aside or ignore inconsistencies so that everything matches up with our model. In the sport of orienteering, when features in a landscape don't match up with what's shown on the map, we often "bend the map" to have reality conform to our expectations rather than seeing what's actually there and realizing we've taken a wrong turn.

Once we confirm a mental model, we hit the mental "run" button, which triggers a sequence of actions played out as one of many so-called "behavioural scripts." Following a script is useful because it simplifies things, saving us the time and mental effort of figuring out an appropriate behaviour each time a situation is encountered. We just seem to know what to do and we do it without thinking.

For example, knowing that she will be working in a confined space, a worker tests the atmosphere, dons the appropriate personal protective equipment, follows all the appropriate procedures, performs the work and then exits the confined space. Through habit, practice and routine, the worker follows the same series of steps each time she enters a confined space.

The script that's followed depends on the mental model that's triggered. If the morning traffic report warns of black ice and slippery roads, our mind takes in this information and aligns it with a mental model we carry around in our heads for driving in those conditions. Even before getting into the car, we already know that we'll reduce our speed, perhaps choose an alternate route and drive with greater care.

To counter this tendency of switching to autopilot, it's important to stay in touch with what's going on around us. Some people, such as members of a wildland fire crew battling a fire for many hours, set their watches to alarm at regular intervals during extended, intense work periods. The alarm serves as a cue to stop, assess the current situation and compare it against the mental model being used. Doing so helps confirm that the correct behavioural script is still being followed. If it's not, then it's time to change the mental model and therefore the behaviour.

Some people would describe it as a form of risk management; others say it's a way of working safely. Whichever view you take, the message here is "Don't always believe what you think."

This column is Ray Cislo's last Ergo Tips. Thank you to Ray for all his hard work. He has written Ergo Tips and Real World Solutions for seven years.

RESOURCES

Gonzales, Laurence. *Deep Survival: Who Lives, Who Dies, and Why*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003.

Gonzales, Laurence. *Everyday Survival: Why Smart People Do Stupid Things*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2008.

BREATHE EASIER

MANAGING WORKPLACE ASTHMA AND ALLERGIES

by Margaret Anne J. Taylor

Jan from Southern Alberta stays home most of the time. She can't enjoy the symphony, go shopping at the mall or even go to an office to work. Public places overwhelm her with a cocktail of chemicals. Jan works from her home office managing administration for her employer.

"Without this job, I would be out of work and destitute," she says. "I have asthma and allergies, and triggers like perfume can cause my sinus and nose passages to swell, or cause migraines or an asthma attack."

According to Statistics Canada, nine per cent of Canadian adults—about three million people—have asthma. Six out of 10 of these asthma sufferers have poor disease control, which can lead to life-threatening asthma attacks or permanent lung damage. Every 16 minutes, someone in Alberta enters an emergency room with an asthma attack.

"Respiratory diseases are as common as heart disease in Alberta," says Dr. Dilini Vethanayagam, an associate professor in the division of pulmonary medicine at the University of Alberta. "Asthma is a chronic inflammatory disorder of the airways," she says. "It is associated with airflow limitations when something triggers airway narrowing (bronchoconstriction) and/or airway hyper-responsiveness."

An asthma trigger is any substance that inflames the airways and leads to asthma symptoms, which include wheezing, chest tightening, coughing and shortness of breath.

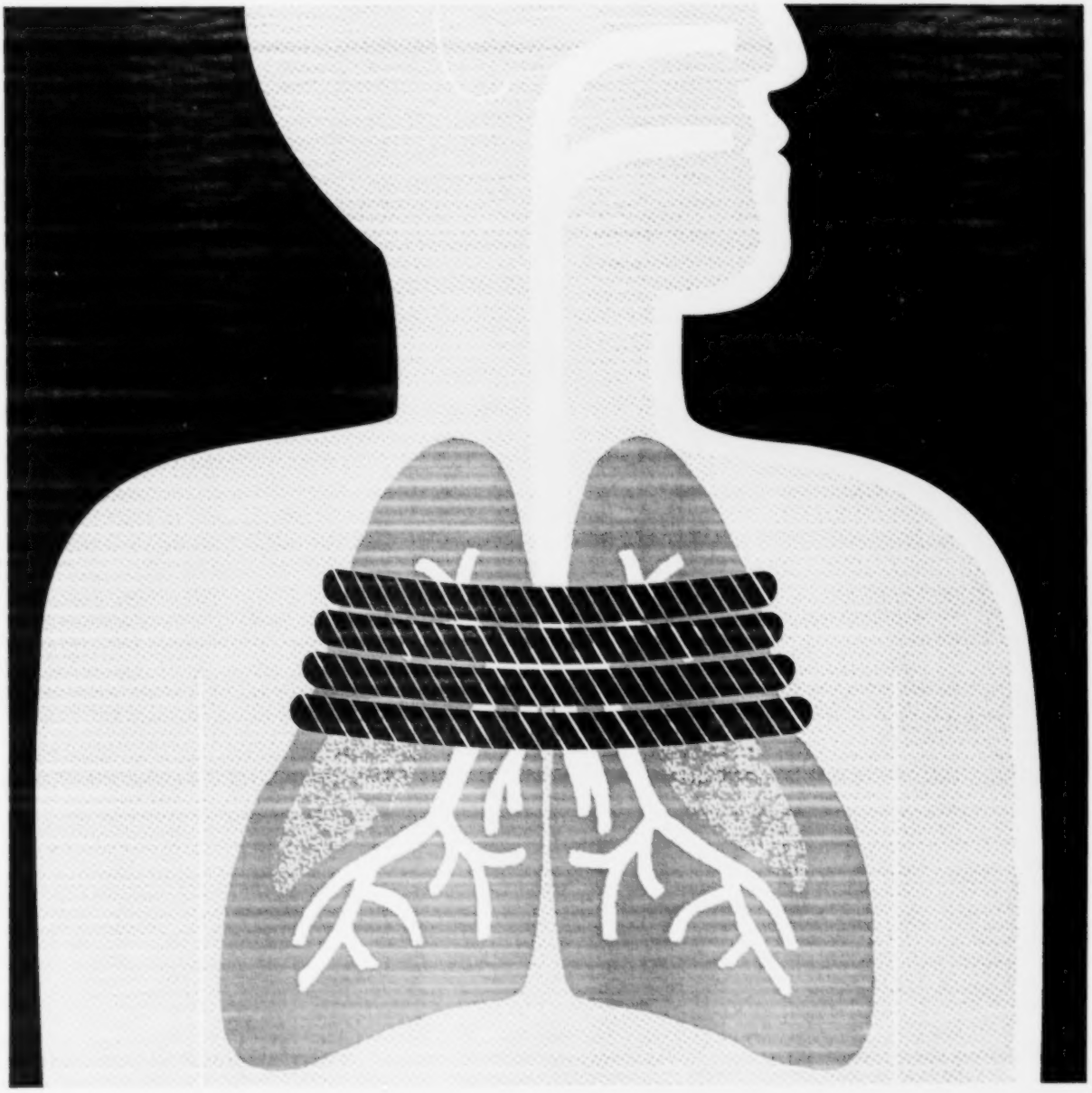
Work-related asthma

Occupational asthma is probably the most common of all occupational lung diseases in Canada, according to Dr. Jeremy Beach, an associate professor and director of the occupational medicine residency program at the University of Alberta. He says it likely accounts for more than 10 per cent of patients with adult-onset asthma.

IS YOUR ASTHMA WORK RELATED?

- Did the symptoms appear within weeks or months of starting a new job or of moving to a new location at work?
- Do the symptoms regularly and predictably occur when you are at work or within a few hours of leaving work?
- Do the symptoms improve when you are away from the office and then flare up upon your return?
- Do other people at the same job have the same symptoms?

Adapted from the Asthma Society of Canada



Because regular and work-related asthma have similar symptoms, healthcare workers find it hard to differentiate one from the other. "The symptoms of occupational asthma usually appear after repeated exposures to a sensitizer over a long period of time, and even small amounts can trigger symptoms," says Dr. Beach. "Continued exposures may result in more severe symptoms, cause reactions to other sensitizers or cause permanent asthma."

Dr. Beach says more than 300 chemicals present in the workplace are known to cause asthma, and 25 per cent of adults with asthma have work-related symptoms. Occupational asthma occurs when substances at work cause a person's asthma symptoms. Work-exacerbated asthma is when pre-existing asthma symptoms are worsened by substances at work.

Asthma triggers

"If we can identify and isolate things that can cause occupational asthma, then it's easier to prevent and manage individual cases," says Dr. Beach. For example, researchers identified that the latex gloves worn by healthcare workers could cause asthma because people inhaled and became sensitized to the tree proteins in latex. In response, most facilities switched to synthetic rubber gloves.

Asthma and allergies are related but different. An allergy

is an abnormal reaction by your body to a substance called an allergen. Pollen, animal dander and mould are common allergens. Allergies have a wide variety of symptoms, including itchy, watery eyes; a tickly, running nose; itchy skin; rough red skin (eczema); swollen mounds (hives); dark circles under the eyes; recurring headaches; frequent ear or sinus infections; shortness of breath, wheezing and coughing; and diarrhea and stomach cramps.

Many people with asthma have allergies that increase the severity of their asthma. As well as the usual allergy symptoms, patients with asthma and allergies can have an allergic reaction that inflames the airways and makes them even more sensitive to the asthma.

Other asthma triggers are not related to allergies. These non-allergic triggers include common viral infections, outdoor air pollution, weather changes, exercise, medications, hormones and many chemicals.

Some people have allergy-like reactions to chemicals found in a wide variety of substances. Although the symptoms may resemble allergies, chemical sensitivity is not an allergic reaction; it is a reaction to a chemical irritant. Chemical sensitivity can be an asthma trigger.

High-risk occupations

According to the Asthma Society of Canada, some types of jobs have higher risks of occupational asthma. Bakers, chemists and farmers are exposed to grains, flours, plants and gums. Animal dander and insect excretions are hazards for laboratory workers and veterinarians. Aircraft fitters, brewery workers, pulp mill workers and hairdressers work with a variety of strong chemicals. Fridge makers, printers, laminators and welders are particularly at risk from isocyanates and metals. Wood dusts can be a problem for carpenters, millers, sawmill workers, wood finishers and machinists. Pharmacists and detergent and enzyme manufacturers can become sensitized to the drugs and enzymes they work with.

In order to create healthier work environments for everyone, employers need to understand asthma and allergies and how these conditions can be managed effectively in occupations.

From studying occupational health over the past 20 years, Dr. Beach says he has noticed a growing awareness of health and safety issues at work. "Marked changes have occurred in health and safety culture," he says. "Some workplaces were once accepted as hazardous. Now everyone wears safety gear and injuries at work are less acceptable."

Focus on prevention

Dr. Beach says most efforts by employees and employers should focus on prevention. He believes that early diagnosis, the elimination of exposures and the use of inhaled steroids play important roles in the prevention and treatment of work-related asthma.

As a lung expert who specializes in asthma, Dr. Vethanayagam deals with the 5 to 10 per cent of asthma patients who have severe asthma. She says this small group accounts for more than half of healthcare costs related to asthma. For most other asthma patients, Dr. Vethanayagam says asthma can be managed by avoiding triggers, taking medicines, working with educators and following an action plan. By controlling their asthma, patients can increase their well-being, help alleviate healthcare pressures and stimulate the economy, she says.

BENEFITS OF ASTHMA MANAGEMENT

- 67 per cent fewer emergency room visits
- 61 per cent fewer days in hospital
- 62 per cent fewer surprise visits to a doctor
- 85 per cent fewer work absences

Source: Alberta Breathes: Alberta Provincial Respiratory Strategy

Testing for symptoms

If occupational asthma is suspected, the patient should visit his or her family doctor, who may refer them to a respirologist for breathing tests. The tests measure how much air is in the lungs and how fast a patient can blow the air out. One breathing test, called a lung function test, can detect airway narrowing. A chemical called methacholine may be used sometimes to check for airway hyper-responsiveness. A low dose of methacholine in the airways will cause them to tighten slightly. The lower the dose when this happens, the more severe the asthma.

Physicians also have tests for allergies. Skin tests are most common. A small amount of an allergen is placed just under the skin, and if red, itchy skin is produced, there is an allergy. The larger the affected area, the greater the sensitivity. Blood tests can also detect some allergies.

Dr. Vethanayagam says it is important for people to be properly tested for asthma. "Many patients who have been told they have asthma have never had this testing done," she says. "Before you could be evaluated for work-related asthma, you would need to have proper clarification of your asthma diagnosis."

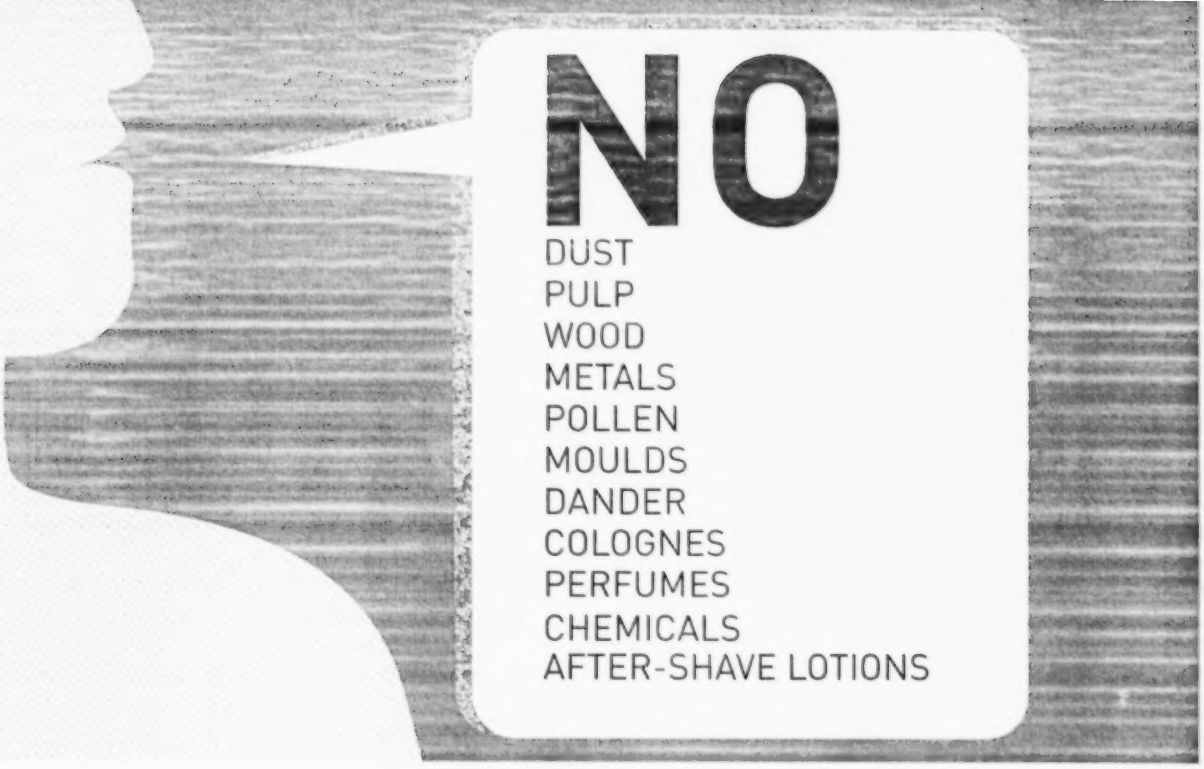
Indoor air challenges

Connie Wong, a health initiatives coordinator for the Lung Association of Alberta and the Northwest Territories, says we spend about 90 per cent of our time indoors. "We always hear about outdoor smog and air pollution, but not indoor air challenges," she says.

To improve indoor air quality at work, Wong recommends a three-step approach for employers:

1. Source control: Prevent chemicals from entering the air by not smoking indoors, cleaning and dusting computers, and avoiding clutter.
2. Ventilation: Bring fresh air in from the outside to help maintain constant temperature and humidity. Fluctuations can aggravate allergies and asthma.
3. Filtration: If steps one and two don't improve the indoor air quality, operate a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter to clean particles from the air.

"When you combine poor indoor air quality with all the



things people are wearing, smoking and using on their bodies," says Wong, "the workplace is full of hazardous substances."

Going scent free

One of the most affordable methods for employers to accommodate staff with asthma and allergies is to provide a scent-free environment. Fragrance-free workplaces are becoming more common in health organizations, government buildings, schools, seniors' facilities, libraries, museums, churches, community centres, hotels and for major events.

Other approaches include air purification, allowing fresh air breaks, letting employees wear respirators, permitting telecommuting, having windows that open, using non-toxic office supplies or cleaning products, modifying desk locations and changing employee work schedules.

Jan from Southern Alberta thinks that in the future she will be able to attend conferences and concerts and go to shopping malls. Society's changing attitudes toward scent-free policies give her hope. Jan says education is the best approach. "When someone has something that is more tangible ... there seems to be more willingness to be accommodating. That comes from people being more educated about those issues. With time and education, this could happen with chemical sensitivity, allergies and asthma."

Margaret Anne J. Taylor is a writer from Calgary who enjoys writing about a variety of health, education and business issues.

RESOURCES

WEB LINKS

www.ab.lung.ca/site/occupational_lung_diseases
Occupation Lung Diseases, The Lung Association–Alberta and Northwest Territories

employment.alberta.ca/documents/WHS/WHS-PUB_ch045.pdf
Workplace Health and Safety Bulletin (Alberta)—Health Effects From Exposure to Wood Dust

www.asthma.ca
Asthma Society of Canada

lung.ca/workasthma
Work-related Asthma, The Lung Association

www.canahome.org/pdf/Alberta_Breathes.pdf
Alberta Breathes: Alberta Provincial Respiratory Strategy

www.allergicliving.com/features.asp?copy_id=18
On the Job with Allergies, *Allergic Living Magazine*

web.princeton.edu/sites/ehs/biosafety/animalworker/pg3.htm
Animal and Latex Allergies, Princeton University Environmental Health and Safety website

THE LAST RESORT

REPORTING ON RECENT CONVICTIONS UNDER THE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ACT

Between October 1, 2009, and January 31, 2010, three companies were convicted under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Alstar Oilfield Contractors Ltd.

On June 30, 2006, at Fox Creek, a contract welder and an Alstar worker were instructed to weld the doors shut on a shipping container to prevent the theft of items inside. When a welding arc was struck on the container door, a leaking propane cylinder inside the container caused a violent explosion that disintegrated the container and ejected the contents. Both workers suffered fatal injuries. On January 11, 2010, Alstar Oilfield Contractors Ltd. pleaded guilty to one count under the Occupational Health and Safety Code. The total penalty of $375,000 was made up of a fine of $5000 (including the victim fine surcharge) and payments of $250,000 to the Fox Creek Fire Department, $60,000 to the Fox Creek High School Division and $60,000 to Norquest College.

Ensign Drilling Inc.

On August 17, 2006, at a well site 75 kilometres southwest of Grande Prairie, a floorhand sustained an arm amputation while servicing the crown assembly on the rig. On January 11, 2010, Ensign Drilling Inc. pleaded guilty to one count under the Occupational Health and Safety Code. The total penalty of $90,750 was made up of a fine of $5000, a victim fine surcharge of $750 and a payment of $85,000 to the Workers' Health Centre. A driller previously pleaded guilty on December 14, 2009, and was fined a total of $5750.

Trinidad Drilling Ltd.

On April 10, 2006, a derrickhand had his hand amputated while he was positioning a section of casing on the rig's derrick. On October 19, 2009, Trinidad Drilling Ltd. pleaded guilty to one count under the Occupational Health and Safety Code. The total penalty of $85,575 was made up of a fine of $4500, a victim fine surcharge of $675 and a payment of $80,000 to Stars Air Ambulance. A supervisor was previously sentenced on March 26, 2009, and was fined a total of $4025.

THE APPLICATION AND LIMITS OF CREATIVE SENTENCING

by **Brian Caruk**

Alberta is fortunate to have a legislated means by which parties convicted of violating our occupational health and safety laws can be directed to enhance work site safety. This avenue is more commonly known as the "creative sentencing" provision of Alberta's Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Section 41.1 of the act only comes into play when a conviction has been entered against an offender. It is discretionary in nature, which means that a court may issue a creative sentence order, but it is not obligated to do so. The court is allowed to take into account the nature of the offence and the circumstances surrounding its commission in determining whether to direct the offender to take specific action to improve health and safety at work sites. This legislation also allows the court to direct an offender to establish a training or educational program regarding workplace health or safety.

Creative sentencing has resulted in a variety of orders that provide for additional worker training and bursary programs. They ensure that workers receive proper training early in their careers. Creative sentencing has also resulted in funding for on-scene medical first-responders.

This provision does have limits, however. In one case the court determined that a payment to a burn unit that provided treatment to a worker with a serious burn injury was outside the scope of what is contemplated by section 41.1. Accordingly, a distinction has been drawn between providing critical medical aid at the work site and providing post-incident care away from the work site. Additionally, family members who have lost a loved one or injured workers who are unable to engage in the same activities after an incident as before, are not entitled to compensation in an order under section 41.1.

Using section 41.1 of the act has allowed the courts to craft sentences that both deter illegal activity and promote restorative justice through greater worker safety and awareness.

Brian Caruk is Acting Chief Crown Prosecutor with Regulatory Prosecutions, Alberta Justice.

OCCUPATIONAL FATALITIES

Investigated in Alberta

September 9 to December 31, 2009

Occupational Health and Safety investigates most work-related incident fatalities that fall under provincial jurisdiction. In general, highway traffic, farm, disease or heart attack fatalities are not investigated. In many cases, investigation into these fatalities is continuing. Final investigation reports are filed at the Alberta Government Library–Labour Building site and can be reviewed there or at employment.alberta.ca/whs-fatalities.

Occupational fatalities investigated in 2009 (as of December 31):	**29**
Total fatalities investigated in 2008:	**29**

For further information about trends in workplace fatalities over time, please see the report *Occupational Fatalities in Alberta: Occupational Fatalities and Fatality Rates* 1999 to 2008, available at **employment.alberta.ca/documents/WHS/WHS-PUB_10yr_fatal.pdf.**

A 29-year-old male research technician collapsed while doing fieldwork. Medical causes are suspected.

A 54-year-old female landscaping worker was working close to but not assisting two other workers felling a tree. The tree cracked and fell and struck her on the head.

A 37-year-old male pipeline worker was finished inspecting a pipeline and was attempting to climb a hill on his ATV when his ATV slid backwards. The worker was thrown from the ATV and struck his head on a rock.

A 62-year-old male residential mover died after he was pinned between two vehicles.

A 22-year-old male swamper was injured when his head was caught and crushed in the closing rear door of a vacuum tank. At the time of the incident, a vacuum tank operator was operating the controls for the vacuum tank after cleaning out the tank.

A 26-year-old male worker and co-workers were insulating piping and conduit alongside a pumpjack base when the pumpjack counterweight struck the worker in the head.

A 40-year-old male haul truck operator was driving a heavy haul truck past a grader on a ramp downhill of a Liebherr T-282 when the Liebherr hit the heavy haul truck from behind. The heavy haul truck was pushed over the berm on the left side of the haul road and crashed.

A 36-year-old male gravel truck driver lost control of a loaded gravel hauler and quad wagon trailer. The vehicles went over an embankment at the south entrance to a one-lane bridge crossing a creek. The truck overturned and the cab went through the ice and became submerged.

If you're interested in sharing opinions or comments about workplace health and safety issues, please contact the magazine's editor through the WHS Contact Centre, 1-866-415-8690 (or 780-415-8690, if you are in the Edmonton area), or e-mail whs@gov.ab.ca.

Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to:
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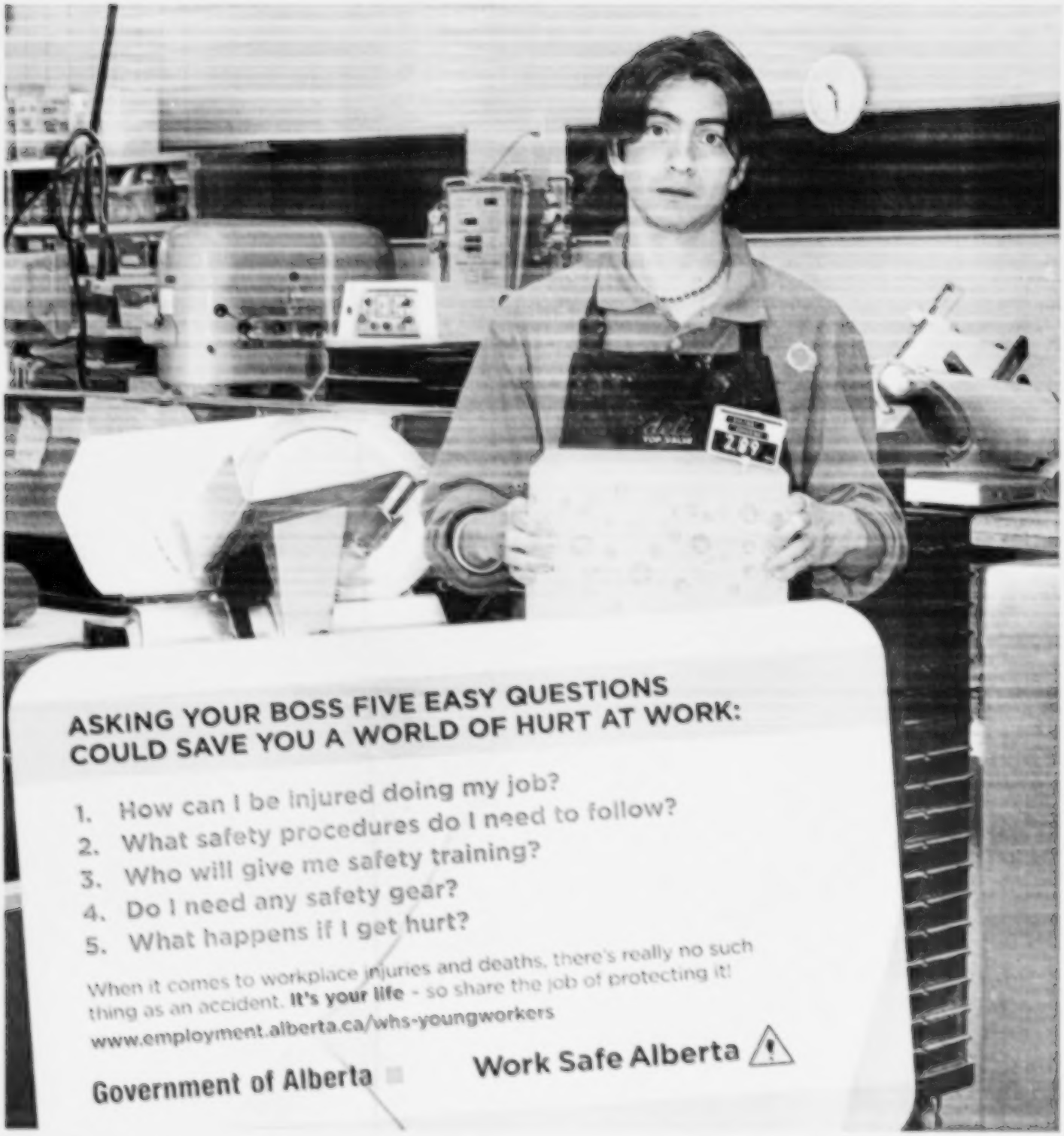
ASKING YOUR BOSS FIVE EASY QUESTIONS
COULD SAVE YOU A WORLD OF HURT AT WORK:
1. How can I be injured doing my job?
2. What safety procedures do I need to follow?
3. Who will give me safety training?
4. Do I need any safety gear?
5. What happens if I get hurt?
When it comes to workplace injuries and deaths, there's really no such thing as an accident. It's your life - so share the job of protecting it!
www.employment.alberta.ca/whs-youngworkers
Government of Alberta
Work Safe Alberta